

A GUIDE TO NEW TESTAMENT STUDY

By

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Abstract

A GUIDE TO NEW TESTAMENT STUDIES

by

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This is a study guide designed to prepare students for in-depth classroom discussion of introductory New Testament issues. First, a discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of an inductive approach to New Testament introductory issues is presented. This leads to an inductive pedagogical model, the main distinguishing characteristic of which is the use of a single field of study questions for different but related areas of study.

The issues in the Nineteenth Century quest of the historical Jesus are similar to many open questions in the lay community today. For this reason study begins with Schweitzer's book on this subject. The first question field is introduced and is to be applied by the students to each stage of the quest. For each stage the results will be different.

In the next step, a new field of questions is presented for application to the first group of primary texts to be studied: apocalyptic, wisdom, and gnostic writings. Various encouragements and strategies for study are presented along with the suggested readings. A final group of readings on the use and interpretation of scripture

is introduced with its own set of questions.

It is assumed in this guide that the student has had a basic introduction to the various critical methods. The next chapter develops an integrated model for the relationships of the basic methods to each other. The emphasis in the accompanying assignments is on the rehearsal of the steps of critical reading rather than on thorough treatment of each critical perspective. That is, the assignments are to be the students' own wrestling with the various critical issues and their relationships to each other. The assignments are to be carried out without reference to the critical literature. Here, as in the rest of the guide, the students are being prepared to benefit from secondary literature without being tyrannized by it.

The chapter which follows deals with cautions on the historical critical method. The relationship of the intuitive concerns of lay people to similar scholarly concerns is discussed. Assignments focus on such issues as the accessibility of Jesus, the indivisibility of Jesus Christ, and the relationship of faith and reason in New Testament study.

The last part of the guide serves to introduce the students to the New Testament literature itself. A new field of questions is introduced for this purpose. Paul is first. The approach to his writings works through an examination of the structure of his letters to discussion of

the purpose of each letter and Paul's theology in general.

The "lost traditions" are introduced: Q, the Johannine signs source, and the pre-Marcian miracles collections. The first emphasis here is on learning to recognize the material in its imbedded position in the received texts. Second, discussion is focused on the theologies represented by these materials.

With discussion of the gospels the use of modern scholars is added to the procedure that has been built throughout the course. The proviso for the use of modern scholarship in class discussion is that insights from the scholars must be demonstrated on the basis of the gospel texts rather than on the basis of the fame of the scholar.

A final chapter discusses general issues of approach, attitude, and the future of biblical study.

I

INTRODUCTION

OUTLINE

- A. Introduction
- B. Scope
- C. Approach
 - 1. The Simpleton's Guide
 - 2. Problems with Primary Materials
 - 3. Question Fields
 - 4. Spreading the Load
 - 5. Attitude
- D. Consistency or Versatility?
- E. Outline of this Guide
- F. Resources
- G. Assignments
- H. The Bibliography

A. INTRODUCTION

It is one of the ironies of preparation for the study of New Testament that training in the scholarly discipline often makes a student more hesitant to engage the New Testament text itself. Naive interest is replaced by a humbling respect for a variety of highly technical tools and the endless background literature. This wealth of material cannot be mastered in one or two courses. Many would say it cannot be fully mastered in a lifetime.

This guide is intended to introduce the reader to basic material in preparation for focused study of the New Testament and to do this in such a way that a degree of

comfort and confidence with primary texts is developed. This material was developed in connection with introductory seminary classes but it is hoped that it might also be appropriate for use with a study group in a local church.

This is a guide to resources rather than a textbook itself. For the most part this guidebook will focus on primary texts. The purpose of the guide is to coach, strategize, point the way, and encourage the reader in the encounter with these texts.

There is much ground that could be covered. The chapters that follow cut a path across this vast field. You will have the opportunity to improve your skills as you go and in the process work briefly in several of the important areas of scholarship. The course of this excursion as outlined in the "Table of Contents" will be summarized later in this chapter.

B. SCOPE

It should be clear that this guide proposes only an outline or introduction to the material and methods in question. The "full course" will be continued in classes and your own personal study.

This is not a guide to hermeneutical issues: we will not ask here what a text means for our time. Nor is this a guide to the exegesis of the New Testament as such. The focus here is on what leads up to exegesis: background

studies, a sound, well-rounded approach to the text, and familiarity with the characteristics of Paul's letters and of the individual gospels. This should help you to understand what one does in getting ready to prepare an exegesis and interpretation of a New Testament text.

This guide presupposes some exposure to basic methods such as form criticism, redaction criticism, literary criticism, and word studies. This exposure need not be extensive. A general feeling for what these each look like in practice will do. Ability in Greek is not assumed here. This should not be taken as an implicit statement on the dispensability of Greek for New Testament study. Rather, it is a recognition that even those who will make extensive use of Greek later in their work may not yet be prepared to use it at this point.

C. APPROACH

1. The Simpleton's Guide

In computer science (as in other technical fields) it is often necessary for people from another discipline (e.g. sociology) to gain quick access to the computer as a tool for their own work. This has created a need for a kind of introductory literature that in some circles is called the "simpleton's guide." In the case of computers, the idea of a simpleton's guide is to help a beginner learn how to

use the computer as quickly as possible: not to understand it fully but to use it. Perhaps later the person can go more into depth, learn some theory, and master a computer language. But first a person just needs to get started.

This guide is conceived along the same lines. It is to be a simpleton's guide to New Testament study. This will be seen in two assumptions that underlie the approach that will be taken: quick entry and "hands-on" experience. In this guide these will be accomplished through the use of "question fields" and primary texts.

2. Problems with Primary Materials

In beginning work in any new area, the greatest problem is disorientation. What is important? What is unique? Where are the significant similarities with other material? In other introductions to New Testament study this problem is often resolved by simply supplying the appropriate answers: this is important, this is unique, this point is similar to some other area.

Three things are forfeited in such an approach. One is direct exposure to the material and the feeling of direct familiarity that accompanies that exposure. The second forfeit is of the practice of skills in working with primary materials. These skills will be needed later. The third loss is that pre-digested rote learning of similarities and differences is more easily forgotten than learning that has

been won through an encounter with the material itself.

Many teachers will agree that exposure to the primary texts is to be desired. However, they say, such exposure can only be accomplished and integrated over a long period of time. There are too many variables and too much new material. The student cannot just jump into a group of readings—no matter how carefully chosen—and make sense of the wealth of new ideas and forms that are found. This is why we have introductions: to provide background and an overview without the problems involved in dealing with primary texts.

Furthermore, it might be argued that any selection of texts must leave a student with a limited exposure to the material. This will result in a narrow or slanted view of the larger range of material the selections were meant to represent.

3. Question Fields

In this guide, the answer to the first problem will be to read primary material using a broad field of questions as a guide. The use of study questions for this purpose is common. What may distinguish the present approach is the use of one set of questions for readings in contrasting areas.

In each chapter you will read in different areas using the same question field. Not every question will

apply to every text or to every area. That will be one of the things to be discovered and discussed. Taken as a whole, the field of questions outlines the issues of importance and connection for a group of texts or for related areas. Taken in relation to each text, the questions help enable a more focussed and in-depth reading.

4. Spreading the Load

This guide proposes to deal with the problem of narrow or slanted selection of representative texts by distributing a wide variety of selections among a group of students. Each person is responsible for his or her own texts and the task of the class as a group is to work out an understanding of the field as whole. Each person's effort counts and each person benefits from the work of the whole group.

5. Attitude

There is another factor in all of this that has not yet been made explicit: confidence. It is important that this approach not only promote your skill and knowledge but also your confidence in your ability to address a text and gain something both personal and academic from that encounter.

D. CONSISTANCY OR VERSATILITY?

All of this focus on the importance of certain primary texts might suggest a perennialist attitude: that is, emphasis on a group of texts as the highest statement of certain basic values and truths. What is actually implied here is rather different. In this guide the Bible is seen as a body of literature with perennial interest or value for us. But this value seems to be a result, not of certain definite and unchanging ideas, but of the versatility of the texts. In each new context the significance of the texts is fresh. In terms of methods of study this calls for training for encounters with the material with regard to its versatility: not the memorizing of the elements of its essential consistancy. The primary requirement for this is familiarity with tools for access rather than memorization of details and results.

E. OUTLINE OF THIS GUIDE

There is a progresion to the material presented in this guide that involves both method and content. In chapter II you will be introduced to the question field as a study tool at the same time that you are becoming familiar with the basic issues of historical critical study before this century. The next chapter will use a new question field and apply it as a tool for ready access to ancient

texts. This will make possible a first-hand look at some of the traditions leading up to the time of the early church.

The following two chapters will interrupt this exposure to ancient material to address two methodological issues. Chapter IV presents an integrated model for the use of the various critical methods. Chapter V will present readings which remind us of cautions regarding the historical critical method.

Chapter VI uses structural analysis to deal with Paul's letters in preparation for an examination of Paul's theology and the special character of each letter. The next chapter builds on form and redaction criticism to look at the "lost traditions:" Q, the synoptic miracles collections, and the Johanne signs source. The question field introduced with Paul serves to help make clear the character of these sources.

In the final chapter the question is combined with contemporary scholarship to look at the gospel materials with an eye to what distinguishes them stylistically and theologically.

F. RESOURCES

This guide is designed to be used in a situation where a theological library is available. The emphasis on reading in a variety of areas has lead to this. Readings are given near the end of each chapter. It is true that

there are good books of collections of selections available. However, the experience of holding a whole copy of the Odes of Solomon and leafing through to one text for study seems greatly to be preferred where possible to the neatly trimmed selection one will find in an anthology. How big is the book? Is each section similar to this one? What comes before or after this selection? These are good questions. The anthology inhibits intimacy with the material and a healthy and often fruitful curiosity about it.

This guide should be used in conjunction with a modern translation of the Bible and a parallel edition of the synoptics or all four gospels. The Handbook of Biblical Criticism by Richard Soulen or some similar handbook or dictionary of biblical critical terms (not a Bible dictionary) is also recommended.

G. ASSIGNMENTS

Each chapter has one or more assignments associated with it. In doing these, remember that a large part of the purpose of this guide is to develop skill and confidence in a method and process of reading. You will, of course, want to learn a certain amount of information in the course of your work. But notice also how your approach and skills develop as you progress through the assigned materials.

Give some attention to the rhythm of your study. Especially when you get to the assignments on ancient texts

your time will be much better spent in a number of short focused study sessions over a period of time than in just one long intensive session. The material takes time to absorb. The chapters contain further suggestions on study rhythm and related matters.

In class presentations try to be concise. Work the material over on your own and come prepared with an organized outline of key points to present. The discipline for the reporter of a section is to be brief and thorough. The class should respond and help by interviewing the reporter to clarify the presentation and assure that everyone has a clear understanding of the material. This process of asking questions in an efficient way should also improve as the class continues and becomes more familiar with the material.

H. THE BIBLIOGRAPHY

In each chapter there are references to books associated with the assignments. More complete lists of resources are listed in the "Bibliography" section at the end of the guide. These lists are arranged topically: there is one list for each chapter of the guide.

Beginning with chapter three the readings for each assignment will be referred to by the titles of the texts rather than the titles of the books in which they appear. Some of these texts can be found in a number of books.

Also, we want to retain the idea that we are reading ancient texts rather than the modern books in which they are collected. All readings referred to in the chapters are listed in the bibliography with all publication information.

II

THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

OUTLINE

- A. Introduction
- B. Why the Nineteenth Century?
- C. Using The Question Field
- D. The Assignment
- E. The Question Field

A. INTRODUCTION

One confusing aspect of beginning the critical study of the New Testament is the task of distinguishing the important contemporary questions and issues from older questions which have by now been worked over and for which answers have been proposed.

Many of the questions that are no longer burning questions in the scholarly literature are still important in other ways. Questions such as: "Are we primarily interested in the New Testament as we receive it or in what might be discovered about what lies behind it by using history method?" are still guideposts that help distinguish the various styles, approaches, and theological positions in the field. The possible answers to many such questions have been worked through, and by the answer a contemporary

scholar gives to such questions one may learn a great deal about the scholar's approach.

Many students have questions and pre-suppositions of their own about the New Testament and how to approach it. It can be very helpful if these can be placed in proper relationship to the scholarly discussion.

This chapter begins a two-sided approach to a working knowledge of the important questions in New Testament study. One aspect of the approach is content centered. The other involves a method of reading and study. The method to be used here is that of reading with a question field. The content we are concerned with is the scholarly examination of the four gospels in the period leading up to and including the nineteenth century.

B. WHY THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

In the second half of the nineteenth century New Testament exegesis was still working in a field that was largely defined in the eighteenth century. The questions which were lively topics of debate at that time remain open questions for many lay people today who think about these things but have not been exposed to the literature.

The point is not that the lay community is behind the times but that these questions and issues seem to arise naturally. They are a real part of the scholarly discipline and a real part of lay experience. Because they form this

bridge, they make an appropriate starting point for study.

In addition, some of these questions seem to come up again and again. A question will be answered in the scholarly literature in one generation and in the next generation new developments cause it to be raised again. The question of myth is one of these issues. The perspective of one hundred years on this pattern can help us in identifying important issues.

The Nineteenth century was a time when the growing scientific worldview affected the view of the Bible in dramatic ways. Careers were made or ruined on stands that were taken as the issues sorted themselves out through several stages. The apparent conflict between this scientific approach and the role and status of the Bible in religious life persists for many people. It is not at all surprising that we should find ourselves so at home with the nineteenth century discussions.

C. USING THE QUESTION FIELD

As you will see in James Robinson's introduction to the 1968 edition of Albert Schweitzer's The Quest of the Historical Jesus, the scholarly disputes concerning Jesus in the gospels advanced over 125 years in three recognizable stages. But there was more to these three stages than the three catch-phrases that outline the progression of the discussion during that time.

The list of questions at the end of this chapter suggests a wide range of issues that made up the fabric of the discussion. Attention to this question field while reading The Quest will help point up key issues. It will also help give a sense of the place of the work reported in any one chapter in the larger discussion.

D. THE ASSIGNMENT

The questions in the question field that follows are not designed to be self explanatory. Sense is made of them by holding them up to Schweitzer's book. The questions will inform your reading and the reading will inform your understanding of the questions. The book can certainly stand alone but in this approach the two will be seen together.

In general terms, the assignment is to sort out the relationship of the questions and the nineteenth century as seen in Schweitzer's book.

Everyone should read Robinson's introduction and chapters I, XIX, and XX. In addition, each person will be assigned one or two chapters to read and report on to the class. These reports should be very brief. The over-all picture is more important than the details of each chapter. In your report briefly give the feeling of the material Schweitzer reports and go over the questions on the question field.

You will note a characteristic of Schweitzer's style that can sometimes be confusing. He often slips without warning into restating an author's argument as if it were his own (e.g. page 16 in the middle and page 39 at the bottom). If you are aware of this it should cause you less trouble.

Pay special attention to the following often-quoted passages near the end of the book: the paragraph beginning on the bottom of page 370 and concluding on the next page and the last paragraph on page 403.

E. THE QUESTION FIELD

for
Albert Schweitzer's
The Quest of the Historical Jesus

Where does this section come in the three stage scheme?
What is the main contribution of the writer(s)?
How does the argument go?
Are miracles important to the discussion?
How so?
How are they understood?
Is this a sceptical or appreciative approach?
What scholarly or historical method is used?
How are the gospels related?
Which one is the standard or basis for comparison?
Why?
Do we want a harmony of the gospels?
Is it possible to construct one?
Who is Jesus in the view of the writer?
How does Jesus understand himself?
What about the synoptic problem?
Where does the gospel of John fit in?
What about the "son of man"?
Is eschatology important?
How did Jesus understand it?
What about the delay of the eschaton?
What about the messianic secret?
What about the Jewish background?
What about the hellenistic background?
What is the understanding of "myth"?

So what?
What difference does this stage in the discussion make?
How did it help the discussion at the time?
Did it support faith or truth?
Is this a legitimate question?
What is our relationship to Jesus as understood here?

Give a catch phrase to characterize the writer or group.

Special questions:
What is Schweitzer's three stage outline of the quest?
(Introduction and Chapter II)
Did Schweitzer show that the quest had failed?
(Chapter XIX and XX)

What are your own questions?

III

BACKGROUNDS

OUTLINE

- A. Introduction
- B. Trends vs. Categories
- C. The Assignment
 - 1. Apocalyptic Literature
 - 2. Wisdom Literature
 - 3. Gnosticism
 - 4. The Use of Scripture
- D. Question Fields and Readings
 - 1. Questions for Apocalyptic, Wisdom, and Gnosticism
 - 2. Readings in Apocalyptic
 - 3. Readings in Wisdom
 - 4. Readings in Gnosticism
 - 5. Questions for the Use of Scripture
 - 6. Readings in the Use of Scripture

A. INTRODUCTION

In the readings for the previous chapter you encountered cultural preconceptions and theories growing out of them that were more or less familiar to you. Questions about the miracles and confusion about who Jesus was are both common today. We may not agree with each of the theories proposed in the nineteenth century. Still, it is not difficult to understand and even identify with the various proposals and the sentiments that were behind them.

The readings for this chapter will probably be

somewhat less familiar to you. These readings are from more than two thousand years ago and half a world away. The readings for the last chapter were from one hundred years ago and a western culture very much like our own. These writings reflect the religious movements of the period before the first century A.D. That is, the period before the New Testament was written. These are traditions that affected the New Testament writers. The personal and community problems that people at that time faced were different from our own. Their religion and its literature reflect this difference.

B. TRENDS VS. CATEGORIES

For most of this section you will be reading materials that are grouped neatly under different headings: Apocalyptic, wisdom, and Gnosticism. However, these headings are not as neat and separate as it might appear from these groupings.

If we take the religious writing from the period before the life of Jesus we have quite a mixed collection of materials. We are able to recognize trends in the material but the harder we try to collect the texts in well-defined groups the more difficult it becomes. If we were to examine these writings in search of groups of texts that share common characteristics we might be greeted by something like the following.

Suppose we have ten documents in which we find thirteen important characteristics by which we hope to compare and contrast the documents. We might assign each characteristic a letter: A = a vision of the end time, B = comparisons with nature, C = light and darkness imagery, etc. A chart of our findings might look like this:

document	1	A	C	D	E				K	M
document	2		B		E	F	H	J		
document	3	A	B	C	D		G	I		
document	4		B	C		F	G	H	I	
document	5	A		C	D		G		J	K
document	6	A	B			E	F			L
document	7			C	D		G	H		
document	8	A		C	D			H		
document	9	A	B		D		G		K	
document	10			C		E			J	K
document	11	A		C	D	E	F	H	J	L

In this made-up example documents 1 and 2 share the characteristic E but neither has the characteristic L. This chart presents a confusing picture, but if we try various re-groupings of the documents we might eventually notice that A, C, D, and G often appear together. Based on this observation we might produce a re-arranged chart of our findings.

document	1	A	C	D		E			K	M
document	3	A	C	D	G	B			I	
document	5	A	C	D	G				J	K
document	7		C	D	G			H		
document	8	A	C	D				H		
document	9	A		D	G	B			K	
document	11	A	C	D		E	F	H	J	L
document	2				B	E	F	H	J	
document	4		C		G	B	F	H	I	
document	6	A			B	E	F			L
document	10		C			E			J	K

Here we see that documents 1, 3, 5, 7, 8, 9, and 11 can be taken as a group. Although members of this ACDG group vary somewhat in their characteristics, still, it seems that we may make some generalizations about them as a group. D seems to be a consistent characteristic of the group. A, C, and G are common. F and L never seem to occur in the ACDG group of documents although other characteristics seem to occur here and there. K might even be a minor characteristic of the group.

We also discover a less well defined group: documents 2, 4, 6, and 11 which we might call BEFH. Document 11 has characteristics from both groups and is difficult to place. Document 10 has a few characteristics in common with members of both groups but doesn't fit with either one.

Even from this simplified hypothetical example it can be seen how difficult and risky it is to speak in terms of well-defined groups of writings. The samples you will be reading from are chosen to represent trends that can be found in the field. Remember, however, that a random sample of texts from this period would look much like the first table of documents above: all mixed up. Even with the fairly clear-cut examples chosen, there will be much variety within each group.

C. THE ASSIGNMENT

With these cautions in mind the reading for this chapter will be done in much the same way that it was for the previous one. We have a set of readings and a question field. The two will inform each other. Questions that seem puzzling at first should begin to make sense as the reading proceeds. Each person should work through a set of readings from each area: apocalyptic, wisdom, and gnosticism. In addition, there is a fourth area that includes all three of these in terms of a special issue: the use of scripture. This collection of readings has its own set of questions and a selection of texts from all three areas.

As you work through each assignment pay attention to where you get your ideas and answers. In class discussion it will be a good discipline to illustrate each contribution with an example from your texts. It is easy to stray when the discussion is based on general observations. In addition, you may have noticed something in a passage that others missed. By reading and discussing passages with each other class members can share and experience the texts more concretely and vividly. We are working for the experience and skill of seeing the text do what it does, of hearing it say what it says. This takes work and cooperation.

Questions are bound to occur to you. Bring these to class. If a question can be illustrated by a text that is

even better.

In working through the assignments you may happen to read some of the modern introductory or explanatory materials accompanying the texts in many editions. If you do so, and if you find them helpful in approaching the texts and the question field, remember that the class discussion is to be based on the primary texts. If you learn something from explanatory material you must be able to defend it on the basis of examples from the text itself in class.

As we are approaching these texts it will not do to report that someone says something about wisdom literature. You may mention your source if you wish but only as an aside while making a point about the ancient literature based on the text itself. Explanatory material can be helpful but if you wish to take full advantage of the approach of this guide you will forgo the modern authors comments to allow as much time as possible with the primary texts. The skills you build in this way will improve your ability to recognize solid introductory material in future studies.

1. Apocalyptic Literature

There is a set of readings in apocalyptic literature at the end of this chapter. Everyone should begin by reading "The War of the Sons of Light and the Sons of Darkness." This should be done as quickly as possible. Skim it or speed-read it as fast as you can. This will get you

started.

The rest of the study time should be spent with a much smaller amount of material: one of the Daniel chapters, one of the sections from Enoch, and two of the other selections. Each person will have 10-12 pages of material to cover. The assignments should be mixed up so that no two people are reading the same set of selections. Each person will be making comparisons between different texts. In this way, the broadest range of comparisons can be fed into the class discussion.

Start early and use the study questions. If you simply read through the texts and questions once a day much of the work will happen naturally. One intense session the night before class will not serve you nearly as well as one thoughtful reading of the material each day.

Try to figure out what apocalyptic is. Come to class prepared to answer the questions if called on. Remember that some of the questions will not relate to apocalyptic. Note which ones these are. Be ready to cite references where-ever possible. Note also your personal or emotional response to the material.

If possible you should copy your selections so that you can underline, highlight, and write in comments. Bring your copies to class so that all the texts may be on hand during the discussion.

Enjoy yourself.

2. Wisdom Literature

The process for wisdom is much the same. Use the same set of questions. There is no long text to skim this time. The readings indicated will give each person about 15 pages to study. Remember that the shortness of the assignment is not just to make it easy (of course not). It is to give you the time to read your selections again and again. This is more like reading poetry than reading a novel or a textbook. You have to live with the material over a period of time. The goal for each person is depth rather than volume. Give it an honest try.

3. Gnosticism

The only change you will note in this assignment is that much of this material is Christian rather than pre-Christian. Although we have some confidence that some forms of gnosticism pre-dated Jesus the best examples we have are Christian and this is reflected in the readings. By the time you finish this third set of readings all the questions should make sense and it should be possible to go through them discussing how each one illuminates differences or similarities between the three sets of readings. Be prepared to do so in class.

4. The Use of Scripture

Note that the readings for this last assignment are arranged topically: Adam and Eve, Creation, and the Ten Commandments. Here we have a new and much shorter set of questions. Each person should cover two units: one to skim once for breadth and the other to prepare in depth as in the previous assignments. It will also be helpful to look up the following words in Richard Soulen's Handbook of Biblical Criticism or some similar resource: targum, midrash, hermeneutic, peshet, halakah, haggadah, mishna, and talmud.

D. QUESTION FIELDS AND READINGS

1. Questions for Apocalyptic, Wisdom, and Gnosticism

Is there a dualism (radical split)?
 Between what and what?
Is there a dialectic (creative tension)?
 Between what and what?
Is the world and creation good?
What about the future?
What about the past?
How are we saved?
What should we do?
Does it matter what we do?
Is further action by God to be expected?
Where do we place our hope?
What is the basis of this world?
 What does it illustrate?
What concepts of space and time are functioning here?
Is knowledge important?
 Why?
What might be the setting or sustaining community for such material?
How do we know or learn religious knowledge?
What is the basis of authority for this material?
What disharmony do we feel?
 How is the disharmony we feel to be resolved?
What is the crucial religious issue on a cosmic scale?
What is the crucial religious issue for me as an individual?
Is this good news?
 For whom?
What about judgement?
What about grace?
Is there a person or figure of religious importance?
 What does/will this person do?
What is God like?
Who is the real God?
How does this material use previous texts or traditions?
Does this material challenge the community or comfort it?
What typical outlines, literary forms, or genre are there?

2. Readings in Apocalyptic

"The War of the Sons of Light and the Sons of Darkness," from the Dead Sea scrolls. Use the Vermes translation if possible.

Daniel chapter 7 or chapter 8.

1 Enoch (Pseudepigrapha): 1, 17-23, 46-48, 69-71, 79-81, 83-88, 89, 90, 91 and 93, or 100-103.

The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs (Pseudepigrapha): Levi 4-5 and 15-18, Judah 20-25, or Naphtali.

The assumption of Moses (Pseudepigrapha): 9-12.

2 Baruch (Pseudepigrapha): 22-30 or 82-87.

4 Ezra (Pseudepigrapha): 4-5, 5:20-6:34, 9:26-10:28, 11, or 13.

Psalms of Solomon (Pseudepigrapha): 1-2 or 17.

3. Readings in Wisdom

Ecclesiasticus/Sirach (Apocrypha): two of the following chapters: 1, 42, and 44; and one of the following chapters: 4, 11, 12, 15, 16, 17, 24, or 45.

Wisdom of Solomon (Apocrypha): chapters 7-8 and one of the following: 2:1-3:9, 9, 10, 15, or 16.

Proverbs (Old Testament): any chapter.

Ecclesiastes (Old Testament): chapter 3 and any other chapter.

Job (Old Testament): chapter 12 or chapter 28.

4. Readings in Gnosticism

Corpus Hermeticum: Lebellus 1:1-15 or Lebellus 1:18-21, 24-26b, and 9:1-4.

The Acts of Thomas (New Testament Apocrypha): 6-7, 27, and 50 or 108-113.

Nag Hammadi: any one of the following: Hypostasis of the Archons 86:20-91:30 or 91:31-97:23, Paraphrase of Shem 1:1-10:10, Second Treatise of Shem 49:10-59:18 or 59:19-70:12, or The Apocalypse of Peter (all).

5. Questions for the Use of Scripture

How is scripture being used?

What are the unwritten rules for the use of scripture?

What possible rules for the use of scripture are not in use?

What sort of attitude toward the use of scripture can be inferred from this material?

6. Readings in the Use of Scripture

a. Adam and Eve

Genesis 2-3.

Neophiti (Palestinian Targum), Genesis 2.

The Books of Adam and Eve (Pseudepigrapha), from the manuscript "Apocalypsis Mosis," XV-XXX (Charles' edition pp. 145ff).

Philo, Questions on Genesis, (Supplement I), "Book I," 30-32, 35-36, 39-40.

Wisdom of Solomon, (Apocrypha) 10:1-2.

On the Origin of the World, (The Nag Hammadi Library), 115:3-121:12.

b. Adam and Eve

Genesis 2-3.

Neophiti (Palestinian Targum), Genesis 3.

The Book of Jubilees, (Pseudepigrapha), 3:1-35.

Philo, Questions on Genesis, (Supplement I): "Book I," 41-42, 44, 48, 50.

Wisdom of Solomon, (Apocrypha), 10:1-2.

The Gospel of Philip (The Nag Hammadi Library), 70:22-72:5.

The Hypostasis of the Archons (The Nag Hammadi Library), 87:27-91:7.

The Testimony of Truth (The Nag Hammadi Library), 45:22-48:15.

c. The Ten Commandments

Exodus 20.

Deuteronomy 5:1-27.

Neophiti, (Palestinian Targum), Exodus XX:1-26.

The Book of Jubilees, (Pseudepigrapha), 1:1-29.

The Wisdom of Solomon, (Apocrypha), 10:15-12:2.

The Zadokite Document = The Damascus Rule, (The Dead Sea Scrolls), x:14-XI:18, "Concerning the Sabbath".

Philo, Volume VII, The Decalogue, XX-XXI.

d. Creation

Genesis 1.

Philo, Volume I, Allegorical Interpretation of Genesis II, III, Book I, VIII-XII.

The Wisdom of Solomon, (Apocrapha), 10:1-2.

The Hypostasis of the Archons, (The Nag Hammadi Library), 86:20-87:27.

On the Origin of the World, (The Nag Hammadi Library), 97:24-101:9.

The Book of Jubilees, (Pseudepigrapha), 2:1-33.

Neophiti, (Palestinian Targum), Genesis 1:1-31.

John 1:1-5.

The Prayer of Manasseh, (Apocrypha), 1:1-6.

IV

CRITICAL METHODS

OUTLINE

- A. Review
- B. Introduction
- C. The Need for an Integrated Approach
- D. A Four-Dimensional Approach to the Text
 - 1. Words and Phrases
 - 2. Background and Setting
 - 3. Analysis of Structure
 - 4. Development of the Text
- E. Definition of the task
- F. Strategy
- G. Assignment

A. REVIEW

We have completed two chapters of preparation for New Testament study. In each chapter we have made use of tools and improved skills that will continue to be of use to us as this course continues and after it is through. We began by working through the New Testament scholarship of the 19th century using a broad field of questions as the basis for study. Our look at that period and its history became a history of the questions. What we found was that different questions were important at different times. It was the questions, more than the answers, in which we were interested. It was the questions that gave a framework for

understanding what would otherwise be a confusion of issues and responses.

In the following chapter we added another element to our work. Instead of reading about the backgrounds to the New Testament we investigated several of the important strains of background through reading texts that directly represented each stream of thought: primary texts. This required a more reflective style of reading. Again, we used a field of questions and found that they varied in importance from text to text and from stream to stream.

In addition to these basic approaches (questions and primary texts) we have covered a certain amount of information about New Testament scholarship and the backgrounds of thought in the New Testament period.

B. INTRODUCTION

We are now ready to look at some New Testament texts first hand and to further refine the approach we have been using and building in the preceding chapters. The main new element in this chapter will be the introduction of a four-dimensional model which will serve as the framework for our reading of the Biblical texts.

This model is an attempt to provide an approach to New Testament study that is closer to what is actually practiced by scholars than the segmented break-down of critical methods through which the beginner is often led.

In addition, this chapter will present some strategic suggestions having to do with the pattern and pace of study to which one must be willing to submit in approaching Biblical texts or any important and meaningful texts.

C. THE NEED FOR AN INTEGRATED APPROACH

It is very rare that a New Testament scholar will complete the work of examining a text having used only one critical method in that effort. It is still quite rare for a scholar to carefully note at each stage of the discussion just which critical method is being employed at each point. That is, in fact, quite difficult to do. It is also inefficient.

This may account for some of the frustration that students find in attempting to approach a text using just one method or noting carefully what method is being used at each point. The critical methods overlap and pre-suppose each other considerably. It also helps to explain why most exegetical articles one reads do not look like the the sort of exercises one often feels called upon to produce in an introduction to methods class.

This does not mean that such practice and analysis of each method is not called for and valuable. But there are good reasons why this can be frustrating and misleading as an introduction to how one approaches a text "in real

life."

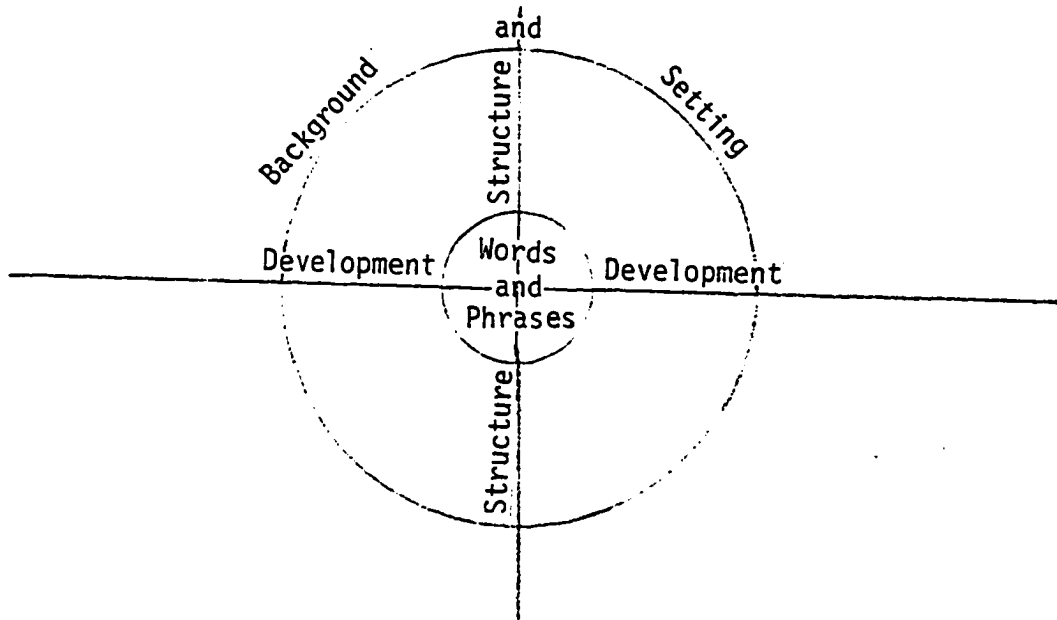
This chapter presupposes a previous exposure to the basic critical methods such as form criticism, redaction criticism, word studies, and the general vocabulary that appears in four lists later in this chapter. Our present task is to complement that detailed and segmented study of critical methods with a comprehensive model that will serve until the student can work out a model that is better suited to her or his own skills and style.

D. A FOUR-DIMENSIONAL APPROACH TO THE TEXT

This guide could not begin to list all the questions or even all the types of questions that could be asked of a New Testament text. Each of the previous chapters has attempted to give in some detail certain specific questions that might enable a more fruitful and critical reading. The following model will suggest only types of questions. One's own list of questions will continue to grow as long as one continues to read and reflect on what has been read.

Even on the level of types of questions and the aspects of text they address, we must choose from among a great range of possibilities. In this chapter we will deal with the following points of view from which it is possible to approach a Biblical text: words and phrases, background and setting, structure, and development. As a memory aid and in an attempt to represent the relationships of these

aspects of the text we will make use of the following diagram.



This diagram is meant to suggest a number of relationships among the dimensions of the text. In the center are the words and phrases that make up the text on the page. This is the basic "stuff" of the text. Surrounding this is all the cultural, sociological, historical material to which it relates in its own time and from the past. This is labeled "Background and Setting."

Often the text has a history of its own. Portions of it may have been around for some time and combined and adapted bit by bit until the text we now have evolved. This is labeled "Development" and represented as a horizontal time line running through the text. Remember, the text may have a future: as Mark does when it is added to and adapted by Matthew and Luke. Finally, there is the structure of the

text: a vertical, "bird's-eye" view of the over-all structure or outline of the text.

As will be seen in the four sections that follow, each of these aspects of the text is also a dimension of possible inquiry. These areas of questioning stand in much the same relationships to each other as the corresponding aspects of the text itself.

1. Words and Phrases

The text on its simplest level is an arrangement of words and symbols. In approaching the text one should pose some questions about the text on this level.

What are the important or loaded words or phrases?
What do these words or phrases mean?
Is there any question about the exact wording of the text in Greek?
What translation problems are there?

There are a great number of such questions. Many of these spill over into other dimensions of the model (e.g. "What is the Old Testament or Hellenistic background for a certain word?" or "Are there repeated catch words that might give clues to structure?").

For our present purposes we may feel that we have touched base with this aspect of investigation if we can point out key words and indicate how we would discover meanings or background for them. There are a variety of tools for this. Concordances, Bible dictionaries and

lexicons are just a few.

The following technical terms are related to what we are calling "Words and Phrases."

Word studies
Text Criticism
Lower Criticism
Critical Text
Critical Apparatus

2. Background and Setting

The dimension of "Background and Setting" involves the cultural, sociological, and historical past and present of the text. Some of this material was covered in the chapter on backgrounds. Knowing something of what is outside the text can greatly help us understand all three of the other dimensions of our model. This can be seen in some of the questions we might ask.

Who are the Pharisees?
Were the Christians the only ones at this time with this concept?
What might have been happening at Corinth?
Does this idea come up in Old Testament or Hellenistic thought?
How big is a mustard seed?
What is Passover?
Are there non-canonical examples of using the Old Testament this way?

It can be seen that observations about background and setting can come from outside sources or can be read between the lines in the text itself. Reconstructing the setting from the text has two problems, however. First, the text is not an unbiased window to its time. Just remember

the picture of the Pharisees that we get from the gospels. Second, it is always possible that our reconstruction might reflect too much of our own experience and lead to an understanding of the text that merely supports what we already believe. Still, suggestions about setting based on the text can be helpful.

Some of the words associated with this area of New Testament study are:

- Setting
- Background
- Sitz-im-Leben
- Trajectories
- Old Testament
- Hellenism
- Intertestamental period
- History

3. Analysis of Structure

In the diagram two ways to "cut" the text are represented by straight lines. The horizontal time line represents changes in the text over a period of time. This is what we might call "Development". This will be discussed in the section by that name that follows this one. The other way to cut the text is vertically "across" the time line. That is, we look at the structure of the text just as it is without asking how it might have changed or developed before or after a particular time. Often this is the time of the writing of the text in the form that we have it. Some of the questions we might ask here are:

Is this a natural unit of text?
Does the text fall into natural sections?
Is there any pattern visible?
What are the major and minor points?
What is the "logic" of the text?
Is this a story, psalm, wisdom saying, or what?

There are, of course, many more such questions. As before, some questions will involve other dimensions of our model (e.g. Are there awkward points in the structure of the text that might betray the history of its development?).

It is worth noting that the word "structural" in one form or another is often used in scholarly writing in association with highly refined and technical methods of analysis involving charts or formulas that break down narrative or linguistic elements of the text and relate them to each other in a systematic way according to theoretical models or constructs. In contrast to this, we are using "Analysis of Structure" here to designate an outline of the whole text much as one makes an outline of a paper one intends to write or of a chapter one is reading.

Unless you are careful your analysis of structure will be affected by the verse divisions and the paragraph arrangements in your Bible. Be suspicious of these. They are not part of the early texts. Often you will end up agreeing with the verse and paragraph divisions but you should realize that these can be questioned if you have good reasons for doing so.

Often, the key to analysis of structure is to come

up with an abstract category for each element of the text. Experience and knowledge of previous work in the field is helpful here but a little thought and ingenuity will usually do the trick also. The following examples may be helpful.

<u>Text</u>	<u>Structural Category</u> <u>for Outline</u>
Grace to you and peace . . .	Blessing
On the Sabbath . . .	Setting in time
As it is written . . .	Quotation introduction
They marveled that . . .	Response of onlookers
What then shall we say about Abraham?	Question introducing an argument
But the free gift is not like the trespass . . .	Statement introducing an argument
A man came to him and asked . . .	Approach of questioner

These are just a few examples and there are more technical ways of naming various structural categories. The emphasis here is on common-sense distinctions.

The other basic way of outlining structure is by using phrases or paraphrases from the text itself as the points and sub-points in the outline. Though different people will prefer one or the other, in practice the two are often mixed: abstract categories as main points may have textual phrases as sub-points or vice versa. If you are not preparing work for someone who favors the abstract categories or textual phrases, you are free to choose one or the other or a mixture. This choice should reflect your struggle with all three options and a careful decision about which most effectively aids the understanding of the text. Your final structural outline should include the verse

references for each part of the structure.

An analysis of structure is often greatly helped by a decision about what kind of text one is working with (e.g. parable, miracle story, rhetorical argument). The structural characteristics and categories we can expect will be different for each of the various genre.

The following phrases are related to the area of analysis of structure and what is involved in that dimension of investigation.

The text as aesthetic object
Aesthetic analysis
Literary Criticism
Structural Analysis
Structuralism
Structural Criticism
Synchronic
Genre
Form Criticism
Gattung

4. Development of the Text

As was mentioned above, one way of approaching the text is to look for signs of its changes and development along the time line. The idea here is to take the text apart and try to see how what may previously have been separate texts or traditions have been combined. This is how the text grew rather than what its structure is as we have it. A few of the questions we might ask here are:

Are there changes in style or approach that might indicate different sources for sentences or phrases?
Does the two document hypothesis tell us anything about this text?
Are there any transitional phrases that might indicate the stitching together of textual material?

Sometimes this dimension of analysis will not be very fruitful for a particular text. In every dimension of inquiry individual questions will vary in their helpfulness. But this is a case where the whole area of "Development" may not be relevant to a text. The text may be completely composed by one person. It has no textual past or development. This is common, though not always the case, in Paul.

As we learned in the previous chapters of this study, "does not apply" is an important answer. This is true especially if we are able to say something about why a question or class of questions does not apply to a given text. In your own work, try to be as clear as you can in such cases.

There is a second stage of questioning in this dimension of inquiry. If we succeed in taking the text apart we must also put it back together. We should try to say something about why it came together as it did. We might ask questions like these about an earlier text—we'll call it "T"—and the work of an editor.

What does T mean by itself?
How does the editor use it?
How does the editor handle contradictions between his view and T?

Why is T no longer adequate by itself?
Why has T been kept at all?

We can, if we wish, re-apply the entire four-dimensional model in considering each segment of text that seems to have existed before the text as we now have it. In some cases this can be helpful. In other cases it might be pushing beyond the reach of our scholarly tools.

The following words are associated with the development of the text.

Form Criticism
Redaction Criticism
Source Criticism
Tradition Criticism
Diachronic
Two document hypothesis
Signs Source

E. DEFINITION OF THE TASK

The assignment for this chapter is to read a number of New Testament texts with attention to the four dimensions of inquiry that have been outlined here. What is important is to train the mind in the point-of-view involved in each perspective.

The expectations here are limited. We will work only with these four main dimensions of questioning. In some cases, only three of these will be of much help. We are not trying to refine specific critical tools or go into great depth in any area.

What is needed is to go through the basic aspects of

inquiry until they are natural and familiar. In this way, when you do learn more about genre, Hellenistic rhetoric, or the theology of Q you will already have a working framework into which these new tools will fit. We are making use of a rather simple and flexible conceptual base in order to develop more intuitive and creative tools. In this way intuitive skills can keep up with and inter-relate effectively with the critical methods.

Hunches and guesses are an important part of the process. Hazard some guesses and follow your hunches. Try to understand why a hunch works for you. Feelings and hunches are good starting points but if something doesn't stand up try another idea.

All of this will be accomplished by examining as many texts as possible in a limited time. For each text you should pose questions in each of the four areas that have been discussed in this chapter. You should end up with tentative answers or well-defined questions in each area. Commit these observations to paper. This is a good discipline. It helps you organize and clarify your thinking. It also helps protect you from fooling yourself, cutting corners, and thinking "I can say something about that aspect of the text" when what you really have is a general feeling.

F. STRATEGY

Reading a text is one of the hardest things we do. There may be times when we resist looking at a poem or Biblical text because the minute we look at the page we are committed to a serious investment of effort and openness.

Reading a text requires courage. The effort and openness involved are not trivial matters. There is also a risk involved in making guesses about the text. Guessing goes against our training in careful thinking since our first years in school.

It is vital that you risk some guesses and some openness. In this way the text will come alive and with it the good secondary literature. When you have made this investment your ability to distinguish vital scholarly treatments from mush is greatly enhanced.

Don't worry about what your answer or well-formed question is. Make sure that you have gone through the important aspects of inquiry with each text and have something to say.

All this takes time. You need to allow at least ten times as much time for "reading a text" as you would for studying a normal class assignment in a textbook. This means that if you would normally prepare 70 pages of studying in a week you will be very pressed to try to read 7 pages of Biblical text in the way outlined here in the same

length of time. It is also important to allow time to "sleep on it." Thirty minutes at the beginning of the week and thirty minutes at the end of the week on the same text will give much better results than two hours all at one time.

Once you move on to the related secondary literature it takes much more time: perhaps 30-80 hours of reading for a basic class paper on one five-verse text. The trap we easily get into when we read secondary literature is that we stop taking the time to just sit and stare at the text itself and tinker with it and try it on in as many ways as we can imagine.

Through it all remember that finally, for the scholar and for the beginner, it is in that raw, stuck, empty, intuitive, creative moment that things happen.

G. ASSIGNMENT

On "stuckness" read Robert M. Pirsig's Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance pages 272-275 and 279. Check all the unfamiliar terms in the four lists of terms in Soulen's Handbook of Biblical Criticism or some similar source.

For each class session two or three New Testament texts should be chosen for preparation along the lines described in this chapter. Come to class ready to present your conclusions for comparison with the work of the others.

The texts can be chosen in any of a number of ways. The references that follow may be used if no others are preferable.

Matthew 5:3-12
Galatians 3:1-5
Colossians 3:18-4:1
John 3:1-15
Luke 22:47-53
Luke 15:1-10
Matthew 2:13-15
Mark 14:3-9
Colossians 1:1-8
Revelation 2:2-7
Matthew 1:18-25
Acts 17:1-9
Hebrews 13:7-16

V

CAUTIONS ON THE HISTORICAL-CRITICAL METHOD

OUTLINE

- A. Introduction
- B. Purpose of this Chapter
- C. Intuitive Concerns About the Scholarly Method
- D. Concerns Among Scholars
 - 1. The Accessibility of Jesus
 - 2. The Indivisibility of Jesus Christ
 - 3. Scholarship and the Life of Faith
- E. Faith and Understanding
- F. Assignment

A. INTRODUCTION

We are caught between a powerful and incredible story and a rigorously meaningless method of investigation. Our task in developing scholarly tools to work with the church's book is surrounded by ambiguities. Still, it is in the midst of the interplay of these ambiguities that significant and pertinent moments of insight occur. In these moments the contradictions in the method and the contradictions of the world meet in a meaningful relationship. The bridge for this meeting is a text.

It does no injustice to the story to say that it is incredible. It is. It is an amazing and incomprehensible

story. People have been trying to understand how to believe it for centuries. Each generation must make what tentative steps it can in this venture. Through it all the story replays, and verifies itself again and again.

Neither does it demean the method of investigation to call it meaningless. If anything, it is to offer too much praise. Many scholars worry that meaning and presuppositions that reside in the method will surface in our exegesis and taint or prejudice the results. To be scientific, they say we must have a clean tool so that there will be some assurance that what we discover does indeed come from the text.

In the midst of this there are contemporary writers who are proposing models of inquiry that attempt to deal responsibly with the problems of the impossibility of developing a completely "clean" tool and with the dilemma of ambiguities mentioned above.

B. PURPOSE OF THIS CHAPTER

The purpose of this chapter is to gain some exposure to these issues: that is, we are going to look at the questions. We will not deal with the contemporary responses to these issues because these responses involve hermeneutical issues which are beyond our scope in this guide. The contemporary responses presuppose the issues we will be introduced to here and it might be good to sleep on

the questions by themselves (or even lose sleep over them) before getting to answers in some other setting.

The hope here is that exposure to a number of cautions about the historical-critical method will guard us somewhat from excess in our work or in our understanding of our results. This tool—this sword—has two edges and we do well to be aware of how the second edge can cut against us.

C. INTUITIVE CONCERNS ABOUT THE SCHOLARLY METHOD

Many people have had or still have reservations about the historical-critical method. This feeling of concern, reservation, or upset can come in many forms. Some examples follow.

There is something wrong with mixing dispassionate scholarship with matters of faith.
What can we believe in if they disprove the miracles (or the resurrection)?
Redaction criticism doesn't help me when I am lonely or in pain.
If Jesus didn't think he was the Christ, what are we to think?

Some of these and similar statements reflect misunderstandings about what is essential to Christian faith or about what historical criticism can or hopes to accomplish.

Still, as we will see in the reading for this chapter, there is much in these initial responses that is born out by further experience and reflection. Many such

intuitive misgivings are important and valid.

D. CONCERNS AMONG SCHOLARS

The readings for this chapter will, for the most part, speak for themselves in introducing several of these issues. Nevertheless some orientation to the general themes we will encounter should be helpful.

1. The Accessibility of Jesus

Some of the questions that were raised in The Quest of the Historical Jesus remain issues today. In fact, much of the larger discussion in theology and Biblical interpretation has been shaped by the issue of the historical accessibility of Jesus. The assumption in the predominant strain of German theology in the first half of this century has been that Jesus is not accessible to critical historical inquiry. This led to the key point of the discussion during that time: what do we do about this? What does it mean for faith if Jesus is historically out of reach?

We will be looking at the issue of accessibility itself in writings that come at the beginning and end of that half century. The first of these is a chapter from The So-Called Historical Jesus and the Historical Biblical Christ which Martin Kähler wrote in 1896. In addition, from the work of James Robinson in 1959 we will read the

first chapter of A New Quest of the Historical Jesus. As you may gather from this title, the question of the accessibility of Jesus has been re-opened in the last few decades. For some scholars it was never closed. What had become an impasse for many has evolved into a number of cautions that inform a new quest on a different level from that of the 19th century.

2. The Indivisibility of Jesus Christ

The issue of accessibility is one of historical methodology. The issue of the violence that the historical method might do to "Jesus Christ" is more theological. Briefly the point is this: if the basic Christian affirmation is that Jesus is the Christ, then the apparent tendency of historical criticism to separate the two is a problem.

The reading from Kähler covers this issue as well as the previous one. We will also read in this area from a more recent book: The Crucified God written in 1973 by Jürgen Moltmann. Kähler will raise for us some distinctions that are an important part of the transition from the old quest to the first half of the 1900's. Moltmann will make some theologically motivated assertions about the indivisibility of Jesus Christ. This combination should outline the issue for us.

3. Scholarship and the Life of Faith

We have touched on a methodological issue and a theological issue: each in relationship to the historical-critical method. We now come to the relationship of the historical-critical method to the faith and beliefs of the church and its members.

Does Biblical scholarship help people? Does it help the church? Walter Wink has an answer to these questions. In order to place his book The Bible in Human Transformation in context it will be helpful to know something about Walter Wink himself that might not be clear from his book. Dr. Wink is a Biblical scholar who has written a book (John the Baptist in the Gospel Tradition) and a number of articles over a period of years. He is speaking from within the community of scholars.

The book we will read was written in 1973 and remains the most pointed statement in recent years on the question of the value of Biblical scholarship as it is practiced for life and for faith. It is an important signal of a change in the discussion in the seventies.

E. FAITH AND UNDERSTANDING

In one way or another, each of these issues has involved the relationship of faith to understanding. This is a relationship which each of us must work out to our own

satisfaction. The discussion has been going on for centuries. And for centuries the concern has been to properly distinguish faith from understanding and place them in the proper order.

Around 1100 A.D. at the end of the first chapter of his Proslogium Anselm of Canterbury put it this way. "I do not seek to understand that I may believe, but I believe in order to understand." That formulation has won favor with many right down to our own time.

However, our situation is different from that at the time of Anselm. We no longer need to strive to distinguish the roles of faith and understanding. In our time the pre-supposition is that they are already opposed to each other if not mutually contradictory.

Faith, so the thinking goes, tends to cloud reason and reason disproves or replaces the elements of faith. Our task is to get these two back together. As long as faith and understanding remain apart we do have a meaningless method (in the worst possible sense) and an uninformed faith in a story that remains powerful but incredible. There is much to be done.

F. ASSIGNMENT

This chapter has provided an introduction to several issues which should facilitate the reading and discussion of the following materials. Each person should skim Wink or

Schweitzer and study two of the other selections. As usual, the assignments should be made so that no two people have the same combination of readings.

Albert Schweitzer, The Quest of the Historical Jesus, pp. 388-403.

Walter Wink, The Bible in Human Transformation: Chapter I, pp. 1-5.

Martin Kähler, The So-Called Historical Jesus and the Historic Biblical Christ: Chapter 1, "Against the Life-of-Jesus Movement," pp. 46-71.

James M. Robinson, A New Quest of the Historical Jesus: Chapter II, "The Impossibility and Illegitimacy of the Original Quest," pp. 26-47.

Jürgen Moltman, The Crucified God: Section 1, "The Question of the Origin of Christology," of Chapter 4, "The Historical Trial of Jesus," pp. 114-125.

Peter Stühlmacher, Historical Criticism and Theological Interpretation of Scripture, pp. 59-75.

Joachim Jeremias, "Forward," The Problem of the Historical Jesus, pp. 1-11, and Karl Barth, "Preface to the First Edition," The Epistle to the Romans, also in The Beginnings of Dialectical Theology, James Robinson, ed., pp. 61-62.

Brevard Childs, Biblical Theology in Crisis, pp. 14-17 and 51-60.

Gerhard Häsel, New Testament Theology: Basic Issues in the Current Debate, pp. 9-12 and 132-144.

Gerhard Häsel, New Testament Theology: Basic Issues in the Current Debate, pp. 144-164.

VI

PAUL

OUTLINE

- A. Introduction
- B. Which Letters?
 - 1. Inauthentic Letters
 - 2. Authentic Letters
- C. Structure of the Letters
- D. Theological Catch Phrases
- E. Assignment
- F. Question Field

A. Introduction

We begin our reading of the New Testament with Paul. We do this for two reasons: he is first and he is fairly straightforward. First, although some of the material taken up into the gospels predates Paul's letters, they were the first material to be written in the form we now have them.

Second, in the letters, Paul lays out his points in a fairly direct manner. He has thesis statements for which he argues and upon which he builds in a systematic way. He tells us what the point is. It may not always be as simple as this makes it sound; but by contrast, the gospels, which are framed in and of stories, often require somewhat more interpretation.

B. WHICH LETTERS?

Before we can begin our study of the letters of Paul we must decide which letters to consider. This is not a simple matter. The practice of writing in the name of a recognized authority figure was not uncommon in the first century. This means we must consider the authenticity of each letter on the basis of style, theology, and vocabulary.

1. Inauthentic Letters

Thirteen letters in the New Testament carry openings giving Paul as their author. Three of these, 1 Timotny, 2 Timothy, and Titus are similar in style to each other and radically different from the other ten letters in vocabulary, style, and emphasis. For this reason these "pastoral epistles" are attributed to another (later) author who wrote in Paul's name.

Two more letters, 2 Thessalonians and Ephesians, appear to be rewritten versions of 1 Thessalonians and Colossians respectively. They are sufficiently different from the remaining eight letters in vocabulary, style, and thought to cause many scholars to regard them as pseudo-Pauline also.

Finally, Colossians presents problems. The differences of style, vocabulary, and thought from the remaining seven letters are recognized by most scholars.

However, these differences are not as great as in the cases cited above. While many still choose to recognize Colossians as an authentic letter of Paul, recent scholarship shows a growing tendency to separate it from the authentic Pauline literature. To avoid being misled by the differences and to keep our list as trim as possible, we will follow Perrin and Marxsen in omitting it from our list of authentic letters.

2. Authentic Letters

We are left with seven letters. Three long letters: Romans, 1 Corinthians, and 2 Corinthians; three shorter letters: 1 Thessalonians, Philippians, and Galatians; and one very short letter: Philemon. It is quite possible that Philippians is a collection of three letter fragments. Scholars also acknowledge that 2 Corinthians contains from two to five Pauline fragments and one non-pauline section.

The letters were all written during the first century in the fifties. The following represents what can be said with some confidence about their dates and circumstances.

51 A.D.	From Corinth	1 Thessalonians
53-56 A.D.	From Ephesus	Galatians and Corinthian letters
57 A.D.	At the end of mission in Greece and Asia Minor	Romans

Philippians and Philemon are difficult to date.

Romans is the most important single letter. This is partly because it is the last letter and reflects Paul's theology at its most fully developed form. It is also because it happens to be a full and general statement rather than being addressed to a particular problem or issue as the other letters are.

C. STRUCTURE OF THE LETTERS

The Pauline letters follow a form that was common in the Mediteranean world at the time. There are five basic elements in this form that we will be considering.

- 1) Opening salutation: sender, recipient, greeting
- 2) Thanksgiving and/or Blessing
- 3) Body of the letter
- 4) Paraenesis (ethical instructions)
- 5) Closing: greetings, doxology, and benediction

Although not every element will be found in every letter, this structure is rather consistant in Paul's work. For this reason it is one of the aids to recognizing letter fragments in 2 Corinthians and Philippians.

Often there will not be clear divisions between the sections. Paul is a skilled enough writer to everlap and weave the sections together in a way that discourages a neat outline of the sections. Still, usually all the sections are there and in the struggle to locate the transitions from one section to the other you will learn much about Paul as a

writer.

It is worth noting that usually the largest section of each letter will be the body. This will have a structure of its own which is determined by logical and rhetorical concerns rather than by some consistent pattern observable in the bodies of the letters.

D. THEOLOGICAL CATCH PHRASES

The second aspect of Paul's letters that we will be paying attention to is his use of theological abbreviations or catch phrases. When Paul refers to "the Law" or "in Christ" it is not just a phrase but a whole theological argument that is presupposed. Paul has a developed theology which he refers to by the use of these phrases in his arguments. This is one of the things that makes the study of Paul more involved than we might expect at first. Any important section makes reference beyond itself to the rest of Paul's work. You may recognize many of these phrases from previous exposure you have had to Paul.

We will be collecting these catch phrases and using them as a check list for our understanding of Paul's theology.

E. ASSIGNMENT

First assignment: Read all four shorter letters and one of the three longer letters. Do not concentrate on

theology at this point. For each letter you read, locate and write down the chapter and verse reference for each of the five structural elements given in the section of this chapter on structure. This will require some choices.

There are differences of opinion among the experts at many points. Try to locate and note the fragments in Philippians and 2 Corinthians (if you are working with it). Also, skim through the body of each of your letters and make a list of the theological catch phrases you notice. You should have a list of ten or twenty such phrases or words.

Second assignment: Read the four short letters and a different long letter. Decide upon the theme or main point or points of each letter. Be obvious. Don't try to go into great depth. Make some guesses about who or what Paul is arguing against in each letter. In addition, as you read, notice the catch phrases again. This time prepare to discuss what Paul means by each of these. In this way it should be possible to get a feeling for the structure and content of each letter and for Paul's overall theology.

The question field on the next page will be used for the remaining assignments with all work on the New Testament. With this assignment on Paul begin using this set of questions.

F. QUESTION FIELD
for
New Testament Literature

Is there evidence of apocalyptic?
Is there evidence of wisdom?
Is there evidence of Gnostic thought?
Are miracles part of or in the message?
What is the structure?
Is this intended for Gentiles or Jews?
Which of these is important:
 the work of Jesus?
 the teaching of Jesus?
 the identity of Jesus?
 the fate of Jesus?
What is the over-all unifying factor(s)?
 How are things held together:
 story, logic, rhetoric, thematic, none?
How did Jesus understand himself?
What about the "Son of Man"?
Is eschatology important?
 How did Jesus understand it?
 What about the delay of the end?
What about the messianic secret?
What is the redaction history of the document?
What is Jesus' message?
What is the message of the writer?

VII

LOST TRADITIONS

OUTLINE

- A. Introduction
- B. The Q Source
- C. Other Sources
 - 1. The Johannine Signs Source
 - 2. The Pre-Markan Miracle Collections
- D. Assignments

A. Introduction

During the time of the ministry of Paul there were a number of branches of the movement of followers of Jesus beginning to build traditions of their own. Paul and his people were one of these branches. But his developed, gentile oriented theology was not the only option available at the time. Even from Paul's own writings we know that there were hellenizers and judaizers to the left and right of him.

B. THE Q SOURCE

There were also other streams that are not reported or responded to in Paul's work. Direct documentary evidence is scarce. What we know of the very early period of these

movements is the product of the form and redaction criticism of the gospels. The most well-known product of this process is the hypothetical document we call "Q". Q is easy to find. The case for a documentary second source for Matthew and Luke where they agree word-for-word without a Marcan parallel is solid.

But Q is still under dispute with regard to its contents. Many scholars are sure that there was a Q. We are able to point out passages that must have been part of it in very much the form that we have them (e.g. Mt. 23:37-39, Lk. 13:34-35). But there are also many points at which there is clear similarity between Matthew and Luke (e.g. Mt. 7:21-27, Lk. 6:46-49). But, because of the lack of verbal agreement, we cannot reconstruct the exact wording of Q. Finally, there are passages unique to Matthew or Luke that sound suspiciously like the solid Q material (e.g. Lk. 6:24-26). Are these non-paralleled passages from Q? We are not sure.

C. OTHER SOURCES

There also seem to be other written sources behind the gospels. These other sources are more difficult to find, prove, and delineate. Our job here is not primarily to discover the documents we will be studying. Suggested listings of texts for these sources are given. Because the extent and arrangement of these sources are still under some

discussion it will be natural if some class members disagree with the theoretical contents of these sources as given at the end of the chapter.

1. The Johannine Signs Source

The first of these is called the "Signs Source" or "Semeia Source" and is found in the Gospel of John. The most obvious clues to its presence are John 2:11, 4:54, and 20:30-31. The first two mention a first and second sign but are separated by several pages of material. John 20:30-31 sounds like the end of a book but in John it is followed by another chapter with more miracles and another ending.

More important than these superficial points is that the texts listed for the Signs Source agree with each other theologically and disagree with the theology of John as a whole. Try to discover this difference and look for John's insertions in the miracle stories to "correct" their theology.

The final touch on the case for the existence of the Signs Source in the way the texts given below were chosen. They were not just chosen on the basis of being miracle stories, of being numbered in the concluding line, or because they agreed theologically. The selection was based first on literary style. W. Nicol has compiled a list of characteristics of John's literary style. The initial selection for our list was based on those passages where we

do not find John's typical literary style. That these texts turn out to be in substantial theological agreement against the rest of John and they include the otherwise confusing numbering and ending makes a compelling case for the existence of a previous source for John's work.

2. The Pre-Marcian Miracle Collections

There have been attempts for years to isolate and delineate a collection or collections of miracle stories that Mark might have used in writing his gospel. In 1970 Paul Achtemeier advanced a reconstruction that involved two collections or cycles of miracles with interesting similarities in arrangement. As you study this material try to recognize these similarities.

Both the Jonannine Signs Source and the Marcan Miracle Collections are built around miracles. It also happens that their theologies agree with each other and differ significantly from Q. These two types of literature, sayings and miracles, provide contrasts which should be helpful in the task of understanding each of them.

D. ASSIGNMENTS

A session should be spent in discussing the Signs Source and miracle collections as a group. Another session can be given to Q and the comparisons between it and the Marcan and Johannine miracle materials.

The Johannine Signs Source:

John 1:35-51
2:1-3, 5-12
4:46-47, 50-54
5:1-3, 5-9
6:1-14, 16-24
9:1-3, 6-8
11:1-4, 11-23, 32-45
21:1-14
20:30-31

The Pre-Markan Miracle Collections:

- a. Mark 4:35-41
5:1-20
5:21-24a, 35-43
5:24-34
6:34-44
- b. Mark 6:45-51
7:24-30
7:31-37
8:22-26
8:1-10

For the Q source use one of the following:

Richard H. Edwards, A Theology of Q, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976.

Throckmorton, Burton H. Gospel Parallels: A Synopsis of the First Three Gospels. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1967.

Aland, Kurt, ed. Synopsis of the Four Gospels. Stuttgart: United Bible Societies, 1972

VIII

THE GOSPELS

OUTLINE

- A. Introduction
- B. Scholarship and the Texts
- C. Reversing Directions
- D. The Problem of Size
- E. the Assignments

A. Introduction

It may come as a surprise to learn that one of the live issues in the study of the gospels is the question of what a gospel is. As in our discussion of Paul's letters we are addressing literature in this chapter in which we allow ourselves to consider the complete piece as an important aspect of the text. While contemporary authors disagree on how to define "gospel" there is considerable agreement that what each gospel writer does with the over-all structure and flow of the gospel is an important aspect of the individual character of each gospel.

B. SCHOLARSHIP AND THE TEXTS

We began this guide with the study of a secondary source: Schweitzer's Quest. Since that time the over-all emphasis has been on primary materials. It is now time to put the two together. In the chapter on backgrounds, suggestions were made about the importance of presenting the views of a contemporary scholar in terms of the texts. If we simply report the view of a scholar it is simply information and our own skills do not increase at all.

If, on the other hand, we demonstrate a modern author's point on the basis of a text or texts we are practicing the same skills of reading and perception that led the scholar to the view in the first place. We also test the scholar's thesis. A proposal that looks quite convincing in an article may be less impressive when we challenge the author and ourselves to demonstrate it with primary material. Likewise, proposals that seem weak on their own may come alive with the text when the two are held up together.

C. REVERSING DIRECTIONS

Having spent so much time beginning with and moving from the ancient texts we will now build on this and turn the process around. We have gained enough confidence and dependence on the primary texts that it should now be "safe"

to incorporate the ideas of scholars in the process without getting caught up in them for their own sake.

Everything must still point to or from the text. It is the checkpoint for all proposals (ours or scholars') and all discussion.

Don't get caught in memorizing the views of a scholar for their own sake. Think of Kee, Bultmann, or Perrin as a pair of glasses to be put on to see the text in a certain way. You will want to accustom yourself to the perspective of a particular author. But this is in order to see the text as clearly as possible from that perspective. It is not to learn the views of the author for their own sake.

D. THE PROBLEM OF SIZE

As mentioned earlier, the overall outline and flow of each gospel is part of its unique character and message. With a limited number of sessions to cover the four gospels this presents a problem. We cannot read and digest that much primary material without some help.

The question field introduced with Paul is one form of assistance with which we are now familiar. The use of contemporary scholarship is now combined with that. The result is an approach to the texts that is a model for work in the future. It should be clear that it was never the purpose of this guide to avoid any use of scholarship. We

have been preparing our skills for direct encounter with the texts in order to make more effective use of the scholarship. This is made necessary by the quantity of primary material with which we must deal both here and in future studies.

E. THE ASSIGNMENTS

For the discussion of each gospel appropriate sections should be assigned from the materials listed in the section of the bibliography that corresponds to this one. Each person should concentrate on one scholar for each gospel. The variety of scholars represented by different members of the class and the different scholars read by each student in preparation on the different gospels should give considerable breadth to the discussions.

Use the question field and draw comparisons not only between the four gospels but also with all the other literature that has been covered in this guide. This is a time to try to get a sense of the whole picture: the relationships and differences in all dimensions of these materials.

IX

CONCLUSIONS

OUTLINE

- A. Introduction
- B. Intimidation or Confusion
- C. Information and Skills
- D. Change, Courage and the Texts

A. Introduction

A number of students, upon finishing this course, have reported a sense of confusion and incompleteness. They have felt that they have been through a great deal of material but can say very little to account objectively for this experience.

B. INTIMIDATION OR CONFUSION

This guide begins with a reference to the hesitation engendered by some common methods of exposure to New Testament study. At the end of such a course students sometimes feel that they are left to produce a paper in which critical tools are poorly used and references to contemporary scholarship are misunderstood or insufficient. The task is often seen as boiling down the best books and

articles of scholarship to produce a report that is less than any of them.

This Guide has tried to lead you directly to encounters with primary texts. This has been done in part to instill a sense of familiarity and ease with the materials. But a price is paid in this approach also: confusion. We have gotten into the texts but we lack neat categories and a systematic overview.

This is partly a problem with the material. As pointed out in the section on backgrounds, distinctions are usually hazy and a matter of convenience at best. We have not tied everything up in a neat package. This guide contains very little information. This is on purpose: it is a guide to an encounter, not a source of information in itself.

C. SKILLS AND INFORMATION

The sense that it is difficult to point to what has been learned here is well grounded. Information, the easiest to measure and report, has not been the emphasis. Skills and familiarity have been the focus. These are more difficult to assess. Still, it is possible.

Several informal exercises might help in this regard. What is needed is a "before" and "after" comparison. First, read over the first chapter of this guide. Notice your reaction and compare it with your

response when you first read the chapter. Notice that there is little or no information about the New Testament. That chapter even more than the others, is written to help foster an attitude and perspective on the task. Does this approach seem more plausible than it did at first?

Second, review the question fields at the ends of chapters II, III, and VI. Remember how they seemed to you at first. They asked questions you did not have the information to answer. Do you now have the sense of the question field as having a function in illuminating your reading rather than confronting you with how little information you have. Do you find yourself remembering the texts that brought certain questions alive?

Finally, look at a few texts. Pick texts you didn't have in your own assignments. Notice what goes through your mind as you consider the text. Would your thinking have gone that way before the course? Do you have a better sense of how you might integrate and evaluate the scholarship on each text than you would have had before?

Students in the past, sometimes to their great surprise, have answered affirmatively to many of these questions. Often the second surprise is that, in fact, a great deal of information has been accumulated along the way as well.

D. CHANGE, COURAGE, AND THE TEXTS

Our world is changing and the discipline of biblical study is changing as well. Much of the information we learn will become dated. Investigative skills will aid us in keeping up with new data. But skills, too, become dated. what carries us on is attitude.

The texts survive. Cultures change. Times change. Approaches change. Understandings of the human dilemma change. Biblical study changes. And the texts survive. We have dared to meet the ancient texts directly. We have experienced the emptiness of "stuckness". We have asked the texts questions that we did not yet understand. And even through all this the texts survive.

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